

TON'S WANDERINGS  
IN  
SOUTH AMERICA





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WANDERINGS IN SOUTH AMERICA.





# WANDERINGS IN SOUTH AMERICA,

THE NORTH-WEST OF THE UNITED STATES,  
AND THE ANTILLES,  
IN THE YEARS 1812, 1816, 1820, & 1824.

With Original Instructions for the perfect preservation of Birds, Etc.  
for Cabinets of Natural History.

BY  
CHARLES WATERTON, Esq.

*NEW EDITION.*

Edited, with Biographical Introduction and Explanatory Index,

BY THE  
REV. J. G. WOOD.

WITH ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS.

London :  
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1879.

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## P R E F A C E.

MANY years ago, while barely in my "teens," I had the good fortune to fall in with Waterton's *Wanderings*, then newly placed in the school library. The book fascinated me. Week after week I took it out of the library, and really think that I could have repeated it verbatim from beginning to end. It was a glimpse into an unknown world, where I longed to follow the Wanderer, little thinking that I should ever have the privilege of visiting him in his wonderful Yorkshire home. I looked upon Waterton much as the pagans of old regarded their demi-gods, and not even Sinbad the Sailor was so interesting a personage to me as Waterton the Wanderer.

But there was one drawback to the full enjoyment and comprehension of the book. It mentioned all kinds of animals, birds, and trees, and I did not know what they were, nor was there any one who could tell me. I did not know what a Salempenta was, except that it

was good to eat. It might be a monkey, a fish, or a fruit. Neither could I identify the Couanacouchi, Labarri, Camoudi, Duraquara, Houtou, or Karabimiti, except that the three first were snakes and the three last were birds.

It was certainly pleasant to learn that the traveller in Guiana would be awakened by the crowing of the Hannaquoi, but there was no one who could tell me what kind of a bird the Hannaquoi might be. Then, as to trees, I did not know the Siloabali, or the Wallaba, or even the Purple-heart, nor how the last mentioned tree could be made into a Woodskin. I wanted a guide to the *Wanderings*, and such a guide I have attempted to supply in the "Explanatory Index." I believe that there is not a single living creature or tree mentioned by Waterton concerning which more or less information cannot be found in this Index.

The *Wanderings* I have left untouched as Waterton wrote them, not adding or altering or cancelling a syllable. They constitute, so to speak, the central brilliant of a ring, round which are arranged jewels of inferior value, so as to set off the beauty of the principal gem.

The plan of arrangement is as follows: First comes a short biography of Waterton as the Wanderer, and then a memoir of Waterton at home. Next come the *Wanderings*, exactly as he wrote them. Then there is an Explanatory Index, and lastly a few remarks on the



system of Taxidermy which he created, and in which he gave me personal instruction.

I have much pleasure in recording my obligations to Edmund Waterton, Esq., who kindly permitted access to the old family records, which he is now arranging for publication. Also to Dr. P. L. Sclater, Secretary of the Zoological Society, for the assistance which he rendered in identifying several of the birds; and to J. Britten, Esq., of the British Museum, for the great pains which he took in ascertaining the names of some of the Guianan trees, without which names the work would have been imperfect.



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I OFFER this book of *Wanderings* with a hesitating hand. It has little merit, and must make its way through the world as well as it can. It will receive many a jostle as it goes along, and perhaps is destined to add one more to the number of slain, in the field of modern criticism. But if it fall, it may still, in death, be useful to me; for, should some accidental rover take it up, and, in turning over its pages, imbibe the idea of going out to explore Guiana, in order to give the world an enlarged description of that noble country, I shall say, "*fortem ad fortia misi*," and demand the armour; that is, I shall lay claim to a certain portion of the honours he will receive, upon the plea, that I was the first mover of his discoveries; for, as Ulysses sent Achilles to Troy, so I sent him to Guiana. I intended to have written much more at length; but days, and months, and years, have passed away, and nothing has been done. Thinking it very probable that I shall never have patience enough to sit down and write a full account of all I saw and examined

in those remote wilds, I give up the intention of doing so, and send forth this account of my *Wanderings*, just as it was written at the time.

If critics are displeased with it in its present form, I beg to observe, that it is not totally devoid of interest, and that it contains something useful. Several of the unfortunate gentlemen who went out to explore the Congo, were thankful for the instructions they found in it; and Sir Joseph Banks, on sending back the journal, said in his letter, "I return your journal, with abundant thanks for the very instructive lesson you have favoured us with this morning, which far excelled, in real utility, everything I have hitherto seen." And in another letter he says, "I hear with particular pleasure your intention of resuming your interesting travels, to which natural history has already been so much indebted." And again, "I am sorry you did not deposit some part of your last harvest of birds in the British Museum, that your name might become familiar to naturalists, and your unrivalled skill in preserving birds be made known to the public." And again, "You certainly have talents to set forth a book, which will improve and extend materially the bounds of natural science."

Sir Joseph never read the third adventure. Whilst I was engaged in it, death robbed England of one of her most valuable subjects, and deprived the Royal Society of its brightest ornament.



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IN the introductory prefaces to *Waterton's Wanderings*, *Autobiography*, the author has afforded but little account of himself, but in the volumes of his *Essays*, and some of his Letters, he has fortunately given a sufficiency of information to furnish a tolerably unbroken biography from his birth to his death. His was a very long life, and as he considered that life as a sacred trust, he never wasted an hour of it.

WATERTON was the representative of one of the most ancient English families, and was justly proud of his

*Sir T.  
More.*

descent from Sir Thomas More. A clock which had belonged to that great ancestor is still in existence, and occupied a place of honour on the upper landing of the central staircase of Walton Hall. It is but a little clock, and has only a single hand, but it keeps time as well as ever, and the sound of its bell is so clear, that it can be heard at a considerable distance from the house. He mentions in his own quaint way, that if his ancestors had been as careful of their family records as Arabs are of the pedigrees of their horses, he might have been able to trace his descent up to Adam and Eve.

The following account of the Waterton family is taken from the *Illustrated London News* of June 17, 1865, and has been revised by a member of the house.

*Pedigree.*

"The good and amiable old Lord of Walton, Charles Waterton, better known for miles around his ancestral domain as "*the squire*," was the representative of one of our most ancient untitled aristocratic families, and, what is more deserving of record in these days, in the male line.

"His ancestor, Reiner, the son of Norman of Normandy, who became Lord of Waterton in 1159, was of Saxon origin. The Watertons of Waterton became extinct in the male line in the fifteenth century, when their vast possessions passed away, through Cecilia, wife of Lord Welles and heiress of her brother, Sir Robert Waterton, to her four daughters and co-heiresses, who married, respectively, Robert, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Sir Thomas Dymoke, Thomas Laurence, Esq., and Sir Thomas Delaware.

*Lady of  
the Garter.*

"Sir John Waterton was high sheriff of Lincoln in 1401, and master of the horse to Henry V. at Agincourt. Sir Robert, his brother, whose wife was a lady of the garter, was governor of Pontefract Castle while Richard II. was



confined there: he had been master of the horse to Henry IV. Sir Hugh, another brother, held high offices of state. Charles Waterton, in whom the representation of his ancient house was vested, was descended from Richard, second son of William Waterton, Lord of Waterton, who died in 1255. In 1435 John Waterton married the heiress of Sir William Ashenhull, and became Lord of Walton and Cawthorne, *jure uxoris*.

"Walton formed part of the Honour of Pontefract, of *Pontefract*, which Ashenhold, a Saxon thane, was the Lord, and which was held by his son Ailric, in the reign of S. Edward the Confessor. At the Conquest it was given by William the Norman to one of his followers, Ilbert de Lacy, who granted it back again to Ailric, father of Suein. Adam, the son of Suein, Lord of Brierley, Cawthorne, and Walton, was the founder of the priory of Monk Bretton, and left two daughters and co-heiresses, Amabil and Matilda. The former had Walton and Cawthorne, and became the wife of William de Nevile. They had one daughter and heiress, who married Thomas, the son of Philip de Burgh. Walton and Cawthorne remained in the possession of the De Burghs for seven generations, and then passed with the co-heiress of Sir John de Burgh to Sir William Ashenhull, whose heiress conveyed it to John Waterton in 1435.

"Thus Mr. Waterton was twenty-seventh Lord of Walton, and sixteenth from John Waterton, who acquired that lordship. There was a grant of free warren at Walton in the reign of Edward I., and a license to crenellate in 1333. Without reference to the numerous distinguished alliances of his ancestors, it may be interesting to state that Mr. Waterton, through distinct sources, traced his descent several times over from S. Matilda, Queen of Germany; S. Margaret of Scotland, S. Humbert of Savoy, S. Louis of France, S. Ferdinand of Castile, and Wladimir

*Distinguished  
ancestors.*



the Great, called S. Wladimir of Russia, and Anne, called S. Anne of Russia. Through his grandmother he was ninth in descent from Sir Thomas More."

*Reformation.*

The Watertons fared but badly in the stormy times of the Reformation, and, preferring conscience to property, they retained their ancient faith, but lost heavily in this world's goods. The many coercive acts against the Roman Catholics naturally had their effect, not only on those who actually lived in the time of the Reformation, but upon their successors. A Roman Catholic could not sit in parliament, he could not hold a commission in the army, he could not be a justice of the peace, he had to pay double land-tax, and to think himself fortunate if he had any land left on which taxes could be demanded. He was not allowed to keep a horse worth more than five pounds, and, more irritating than all, he had either to attend the parish church or to pay twenty pounds for every month of absence. In fact, a Roman Catholic was looked upon and treated as a wholly inferior being, and held much the same relative position to his persecutors as Jews held towards the Normans and Saxons in the times of the Crusades.

*Coercive Acts.*

Within the memory of many now living, the worst of the oppressive acts have been repealed, and Roman Catholics are now as free to follow their own form of worship as before the days of Henry VIII. They have seats in parliament and on the bench, they hold commissions both in the army and navy, and all the petty but galling interferences with the details of their private life have been abolished.

Still, Waterton was, during some of his best years, a personal sufferer from these acts, and they rankled too deeply in his mind to be forgotten. Hence, the repeated and mostly irrelevant allusions in his writings to Martin Luther, Henry VIII., Queen Bess, Archbishop Cranmer,

Oliver Cromwell, Charles Stuart, "Dutch William" (mostly associated with the "Hanoverian" rat and the national debt), and other personages celebrated in history.

Deeply as he felt the indignities to which he and his family and co-religionists had been subjected, and frequently as he referred to them, both in writing and conversation, he never used a worse weapon than irony, and even that was tempered by an underlying current of humour. He had felt the wounds, but he could jest at the scars.

On principle he refused to qualify as Deputy-Lieutenant and magistrate, because he had been debarred from doing so previously to the Emancipation Act. His son, however, serves both offices.

*Religious  
scruples.*

Born in 1782, he spent his childish years in the old mansion and grounds of the family, and at a very early age displayed those powers of observation, love of nature and enterprise, which enabled him to earn a place among the first order of practical naturalists both at home and abroad.

*Birth.*

At ten years of age he was placed under the Rev. A. Strong's care, in a school just founded at Tudhoe, a village near Durham. From Waterton's reminiscences, his instructor seems to have inclined to the severe order of discipline, and to have been rather liberal of the birch, of which instrument Waterton had his full share. His account of storming the larder for the support of hungry inmates; of the anxious glances which he cast in the morning to judge by the master's wig of the state of his temper; and of being captured in the very act of getting through a barred window, is exceedingly humorous.

*Tudhoe.*

He also relates two anecdotes, both telling against himself, and both prospective, as it were, of the celebrated fact of riding on the back of a cayman and of his ship-

*Two  
anecdotes.*

*The cow  
and the  
pond.*

wreck. He was "dared" by his comrades to get on the back of a cow, which he did, but less fortunate than in his cayman adventure, was ignominiously thrown over her horns. He also took it into his head to get into a washing-tub, and take a cruise in the horse-pond; but lost his balance at the sudden appearance of the master, and was overturned into the muddy water.

The whole of the account of his Tudhoe school experiences is given in a collected volume of his *Essays and Letters* (F. Warne & Co.), edited by Mr. N. Moore, who had the sad privilege of being with him when he met with his fatal accident, and by his sofa when he died, about thirty-eight hours afterwards.

*Ushaw  
College.*

Tudhoe then being only a preliminary school, though it has since developed into Ushaw College, Waterton was removed at fourteen years of age to Stonyhurst, where he was one of the first pupils. This establishment, then a comparatively small one, was conducted by the English Jesuits who had been driven from their home at Liège. Of them Waterton always spoke with reverence and affection, and his life at Stonyhurst was a singularly happy one.

*Stony-  
hurst.*

At first, his ingrained propensity for enterprise led him into trouble, and one adventure is too good not to be narrated in his own words. His account of it is another example of the way in which he enjoyed telling an anecdote against himself.

"At Stonyhurst there are boundaries marked out to the students, which they are not allowed to pass; and there are prefects always pacing to and fro within the lines to prevent any unlucky boy from straying on the other side of them.

*Out of  
bounds.*

"Notwithstanding the vigilance of the lynx-eyed guardians, I would now and then manage to escape, and would

bolt into a very extensive labyrinth of yew and holly trees close at hand. It was the chosen place for animated nature. Birds, in particular, used to frequent the spacious enclosure, both to obtain food and enjoy security. Many a time have I hunted the founmart and the squirrel. I once took a cut through it to a neighbouring wood, where I knew of a carrion-crow's nest. The prefect missed me; and judging that I had gone into the labyrinth, he gave chase without loss of time. After eluding him in cover for nearly half an hour, being hard pressed, I took away down a hedgerow. *Discovery and chase.*

"Here (as I learned afterwards) he got a distant sight of me; but it was not sufficiently distinct for him to know to a certainty that I was the fugitive. I luckily succeeded in reaching the outbuildings which abutted on the college, and lay at a considerable distance from the place where I had first started. I had just time to enter the postern gate of a pigsty, when, most opportunely, I found old Joe Bowren, the brewer, bringing straw into the sty. He was more attached to me than to any other boy, for I had known him when I was at school in the North, and had made him a present of a very fine terrier. *Refuge in a pigsty.*

"'I've just saved myself, Joe,' said I; 'cover me up with litter.'

"He had hardly complied with my request, when in bounced the prefect by the same gate through which I had entered.

"'Have you seen Charles Waterton?' said he, quite out of breath.

"My trusty guardian answered, in a tone of voice which would have deceived anybody, 'Sir, I have not spoken a word to Charles Waterton these three days, to the best of my knowledge.'

"Upon this, the prefect, having lost all scent of me,

*Escape.* gave up the pursuit, and went his way. When he had disappeared, I stole out of cover, as strongly perfumed as was old Falstaff when they had turned him out of the buck basket.

“Once I had gone into the labyrinth to look into a magpie’s nest, which was in a high hollow tree; and hearing the sound of voices near, I managed to get a resting-place in the tree just over the nest, and there I squatted, waiting the event. Immediately the President, two other Jesuits, and the present Mr. Salvin of Croxdale Hall, passed close under the tree without perceiving me.

*Insight  
into  
character.*

“The good fathers were aware of my predominant propensity. Though it was innocent in itself, nevertheless it was productive of harm in its consequences, by causing me to break the college rules, and thus to give a bad example to the community at large. Wherefore, with a magnanimity, and excellent exercise of judgment, which are only the province of those who have acquired a consummate knowledge of human nature, and who know how to turn to advantage the extraordinary dispositions of those intrusted to their care, they sagaciously managed matters in such a way as to enable me to ride my hobby to a certain extent, and still, at the same time, to prevent me from giving a bad example.

“As the establishment was very large, and as it contained an abundance of prey, the Hanoverian rat, which fattens so well on English food, and which always contrives to thrust its nose into every man’s house when there is anything to be got, swarmed throughout the vast extent of this antiquated mansion. The ability which I showed in curtailing the career of this voracious intruder did not fail to bring me into considerable notice. The cook, the baker, the gardener, and my friend old Bowren, could all bear testimony to my progress in this line. By a mutual



understanding I was made rat-catcher to the establishment, and also fox-taker, fowmart-killer, and crossbow-charger at the time when the young rooks were fledged. Moreover, I fulfilled the duties of organ-blower and football-maker with entire satisfaction to the public.

"I was now at the height of my ambition. I followed up my calling with great success. The vermin disappeared by the dozen; the books were moderately well thumbed; and, according to my notion of things, all went on perfectly right."

*Com-  
grimage.*

One of those wise teachers did him an inestimable service. He called the lad into his room, told him that his roving disposition would carry him into distant countries, and asked him to promise that from that time he would not touch either wine or spirits. Waterton gave the promise, and kept it to the hour of his death, more than sixty years afterwards. Once, when returning from one of his foreign expeditions, he took a glass of beer at dinner, but, finding the taste, from long disuse, unpleasantly bitter, he put down the glass and never touched beer again.

At the age of eighteen he left Stonyhurst with much regret, and after a year spent at Walton Hall amid the pleasures of the field, he started on the first of his journeys abroad. It was during the Peace of Amiens, and Spain was chosen as the country which he should visit. After staying a short time at Cadix, he sailed for Malaga, and had the good fortune to visit Gibraltar just in time to see the celebrated apes.

*Departure  
from  
Stony-  
hurst.*

Gibraltar was the last place in Europe where apes lived wild. How they got there no one knows, but Waterton suggests in one of his Essays that they belonged originally to Africa.

"Let us imagine that, in times long gone by, the present Rock of Gibraltar was united to the corresponding

*Apes of  
Gibraltar.*

mountain called Ape's Hill, on the coast of Barbary ; and that, by some tremendous convulsion of nature, a channel had been made between them, and had thus allowed the vast Atlantic Ocean to mix its waves with those of the Mediterranean Sea.

"If apes had been on Gibraltar when the sudden shock occurred, these unlucky mimickers of man would have seen their late intercourse with Africa quite at an end. A rolling ocean, deep and dangerous, would have convinced them that there would never again be a highway overland from Europe into Africa at the Straits of Gibraltar.

"Now as long as trees were allowed to grow on the Rock of Gibraltar, these prisoner-apes would have been pretty well off. But, in the lapse of time and change of circumstances, forced by 'necessity's supreme command,' for want of trees, they would be obliged to take to the ground on all-fours, and to adopt a very different kind of life from that which they had hitherto pursued."

The animal here mentioned is the Barbary Ape, or Magot, a species of Macaque. At Gibraltar it feeds largely on the scorpions that have their habitations under the loose stones. I do not think that Waterton's suggestion as to its altered habits is carried out by facts, for the magot is quite as much at home among rocks or among trees, as are the great baboons of Southern Africa. I have seen a number of magots in a large cage, or rather, apartment, in the open air. They were supplied with rock-work and trees, and of the two seemed to prefer the former. Their colours harmonised so completely with that of the rough stones on which they sat, that many persons passed the cage, thinking it to be untenanted, while five or six magots were seated among the rocks, and almost as motionless as the stones themselves.

Generally, the Gibraltar magots keep themselves so

much aloof, that they cannot be seen without the aid of a telescope, but Waterton was fortunate enough to see the whole colony on the move, they being forced to leave their quarters by a change of wind. He counted between fifty and sixty of them, some having young on their backs.

After staying for more than a year in Malaga, and having apparently in the meantime acquired the Spanish language, of which he was totally ignorant when he entered Cadiz, but in which he was afterwards a proficient, *Flipped on Malaga.* he projected a visit to Malta, but was checked by a terrible obstacle. This was the "black-vomit," which broke out with irresistible force, accompanied with cholera and yellow fever.

The population died by thousands, and so many were the victims of these diseases that graves could not be dug fast enough to keep pace with the mortality. Large pits were dug—much like our plague-pits—and as they could not accommodate the coffins, the bodies of the dead were flung promiscuously into the pits. An uncle of Waterton died of the disease, his body was taken out of its coffin and thrown into the pit, and just beneath him lay the body of a Spanish marquis. No less than fourteen thousand people died in Malaga, notwithstanding that fifty thousand persons had fled from the city.

Waterton did not escape scatheless. He was seized with the black-vomit, but, although it was thought that *Seized with sickness.* he could not live until the following day, his great strength of constitution, aided by his simple mode of life, enabled him to conquer in the struggle. As if to add to the terrors of the time, earthquakes followed the plague, and every one who possessed another home was anxious to leave a spot which had been stricken with such plagues, and among them was Waterton. But the authorities had meanwhile laid an embargo on the shipping, and it was next to

*An escape  
planned.*

impossible to get away. At last, at the risk of imprisonment for life, he escaped by the daring and forethought of a Swedish captain.

He took on board Waterton and his younger brother, the former being entered on the ship's books as a Swedish carpenter, and the latter as a passenger. How carefully the escape was planned, and how skilfully it was executed, must be told in Waterton's own words :—

“We slept on board for many successive nights, in hopes of a fair wind to carry us through the Straits. At last, a real east wind did come, and it blew with great violence. The captain, whose foresight and precautions were truly admirable, had given the strictest orders to the crew that not a word should be spoken whilst we were preparing to escape. We lay in close tier amongst forty sail of merchantmen. The harbour-master having come his usual rounds and found all right, passed on without making any observations.

“At one o'clock, P.M., just as the governor had gone to the eastward to take an airing in his carriage, as was his custom every day, and the boats of two Spanish brigs-of-war at anchor in the harbour had landed their officers for the afternoon's amusements, our vessel worked out clear of the rest, and instantly became a cloud of canvas. The captain's countenance, which was very manly, exhibited a portrait of cool intrepidity rarely seen : had I possessed the power, I would have made him an admiral on the spot.

*Success.* “The vessel drove through the surf with such a press of sail that I expected every moment to see her topmasts carried away. Long before the brigs-of-war had got their officers on board, and had weighed in chase of us, we were far at sea ; and when night had set in we lost sight of them for ever, our vessel passing Gibraltar at the rate of nearly eleven knots an hour.”

It was indeed fortunate for Waterton that he succeeded in making his escape, for in the following spring the plague returned with increased violence, and no less than thirty-six thousand more victims perished. Waterton never dwells on the hardships and sufferings which he underwent in his travels, but he remarks that his constitution was much shaken by the Malaga illness, and that in all probability he would not have survived a second attack. *Shaken by illness.* He had tried to persuade another uncle to take part in the escape, but he declined, and was carried off by the second outbreak of the pestilence.

So ended Waterton's first experience of foreign travel. It was not by any means an encouraging tour, for he had lost relatives, friends, and health, while he had gained little except a knowledge of travel, and the sight of flamingos, vultures, and apes at liberty.

It was characteristic of Waterton that when he found himself at Hull, forty-four years after he started on his travels, he made inquiries about the captain of the ship in which he took his first voyage, discovered that he was alive, sought him out, and renewed the acquaintance begun so many years before.

His weakened state caused him to take cold as he was sailing up the Channel ; the cold settled on the lungs, and he was scarcely in less danger in England than he had been in Malaga. However, he again rallied, and was able once more to join the hunting-field. Still, the shock to the system had been very great, and to the end of his life, though he could endure almost any amount of heat, he was painfully sensitive to cold, and especially to cold winds. The chilly climate of England did not agree *Climate of England.* with his health, and he found himself again obliged to go abroad. He longed, he said, "to bask in a warmer sun."



*Voyage to  
Demerara.*

Some estates in Demerara being in possession of the family, Waterton went to superintend them, and in the interval before starting, made the personal acquaintance of Sir Joseph Banks, who at once appreciated the powers which the young traveller was afterwards to develop. He gave Waterton a piece of most excellent advice, namely, to come home for a time at least once in three years.

He continued to administer the estates for eight years, when, as both his father and uncle, the proprietors of the estates, were dead, he handed over the property to those who had a right to it, and thence began his world-famed *Wanderings*, the account of which will be given exactly as he wrote it; without the change or omission of a syllable, or the addition of a note.

## CHAPTER II.

Journey to Orinoco with despatches.—Adventure with a venomous snake.—An involuntary bath.—A huge cayman.—The Labarri snake.—Dinner party in Angostura.—A too liberal table.—The Governor's uniform.—Dining in shirt-sleeves.—A more sensible uniform.—Publication of the *Wanderings*.—Reception by the critics.—Sydney Smith.—Swainson's criticism upon the cayman—Truth in the garb of fiction.—Waterton's style of writing.—Quotations.—His favourite authors.—Sense of humour.—How he answered the critics.—Charge of eccentricity.—How he was eccentric.—Travels on the Continent.—Shipwreck.—Gallant conduct of Prince Canino.—Lost by gold.—Fall into Dover harbour and narrow escape.—The lancet and calomel.—Judgment of the vampire.—A bad wound.—Bare feet and bad pavement.—Mode of cure.—Accidents at home.—Gunshot wound.—Severe fall and dangerous injuries.—Crowther the bone-setter.—A painful operation.—Ultimate recovery.—A characteristic warning.

DURING his stay in Demerara, he was selected as the bearer of despatches to the Spanish Government in Orinoco, and received the first commission which had been held by any one bearing the name of Waterton since the days of Queen Mary; the commission being dated August 2, 1808. *Despatches to Orinoco.*

While passing up the Orinoco river in the fulfilment of this mission, an adventure occurred which had well-nigh deprived the world of the *Wanderings*.

"During the whole of the passage up the river, there was a grand feast for the eyes and ears of an ornithologist. In the swampy parts of the wooded islands, which abound in this mighty river, we saw waterfowl innumerable; and

*Tropical  
birds.*

when we had reached the higher grounds it was quite charming to observe the immense quantities of parrots and scarlet aras which passed over our heads. The loud harsh screams of the bird called the horned screamer were heard far and near; and I could frequently get a sight of this extraordinary bird as we passed along; but I never managed to bring one down with the gun, on account of the difficulty of approaching it.

"While we were wending our way up the river, an accident happened of a somewhat singular nature. There was a large labarri snake coiled up in a bush, which was close to us. I fired at it, and wounded it so severely that it could not escape. Being wishful to dissect it, I reached over into the bush, with the intention to seize it by the throat, and convey it aboard. The Spaniard at the tiller, on seeing this, took the alarm, and immediately put his helm apart. This forced the vessel's head to the stream, and I was left hanging to the bush with the snake close to me, not having been able to recover my balance as the vessel veered from the land. I kept firm hold of the branch to which I was clinging, and was three times overhead in the water below, presenting an easy prey to any alligator that might have been on the look-out for a meal.

*Wounded  
Labarri.*

"Luckily a man who was standing near the pilot, on seeing what had happened, rushed to the helm, seized hold of it, and put it hard a-starboard, in time to bring the head of the vessel back again. As they were pulling me up, I saw that the snake was evidently too far gone to do mischief; and so I laid hold of it and brought it aboard with me, to the horror and surprise of the crew. It measured eight feet in length. As soon as I had got a change of clothes, I killed it, and made a dissection of the head.

"I would sometimes go ashore in the swamps to shoot

marondies, which are somewhat related to the pheasant ; but they were very shy, and it required considerable address to get within shot of them. In these little excursions I now and then smarted for my pains. More than once I got among some hungry leeches, which made pretty free with my legs. The morning after I had had the adventure with the Labarri snake, a cayman slowly *Cayman.* passed our vessel. All on board agreed that this tyrant of the fresh waters could not be less than thirty feet long."

I ought to state that the Labarri snake here mentioned is one of the most venomous serpents of Guiana, but as it will be fully described in a subsequent page, I shall say no more about it at present. Waterton never feared snakes, even though knowing that their bite is certain death, but the coxswain of the boat, not having such nerve, might well be excused for taking alarm.

A rather amusing incident took place when he had reached his destination.

"On arriving at Angostura, the capital of the Orinoco, *Angostura.* we were received with great politeness by the Governor. Nothing could surpass the hospitality of the principal inhabitants. They never seemed satisfied unless we were partaking of the dainties which their houses afforded. Indeed, we had feasting, dancing, and music in superabundance.

"The Governor, Don Felipe de Ynciarte, was tall and corpulent. On our first introduction, he told me that he expected the pleasure of our company to dinner every day during our stay in Angostura. We had certainly every reason to entertain very high notions of the plentiful supply of good things which Orinoco afforded ; for, at the first day's dinner, I counted more than forty dishes of fish and flesh. The governor was superbly

*Heavy  
uniform.*

attired in a full uniform of gold and blue, the weight of which alone, in that hot climate, and at such a repast, was enough to have melted him down. He had not half got through his soup before he began visibly to liquefy. I looked at him, and bethought me of the old saying, 'How I sweat! said the mutton-chop to the gridiron.'

"He now became exceedingly uneasy; and I myself had cause for alarm; but our sensations arose from very different causes. He, no doubt, already felt that the tightness of his uniform, and the weight of the ornaments upon it, would never allow him to get through that day's dinner with any degree of comfort to himself; I, on the other hand (who would have been amply satisfied with one dish well done) was horrified at the appalling sight of so many meats before me. Good-breeding whispered to me, and said; 'Try a little of most of them.' Temperance replied, 'Do so at your peril; and for your over-strained courtesy, you shall have yellow-fever before midnight.'

*Heat and  
Etiquette.*

"At last the Governor said to me, in Spanish, 'Don Carlos, this is more than man can bear. *No puedo sufrir tanto*. Pray pull off your coat, and tell your companions to do the same; and I'll show them the example.' On saying this, he stripped to the waistcoat; and I and my friends and every officer at table did the same. The next day, at dinner-time, we found his Excellency clad in a uniform of blue Salempore, slightly edged with gold lace."

*End of  
Wander-  
ings.*

His tropical *Wanderings* came to an end in 1825, in which year he published the now famous volume. At first, he received from the critics much the same treatment as did Bruce and Le Vaillant. Critics would not believe that Bruce ever saw a living ox cut up for food, or



that the Abyssinians ate beef raw in preference to cooked. Neither would they believe that Le Vaillant ever chased a giraffe, because, as they said, there was no such animal, and that therefore, Le Vaillant could not have seen it.

*The  
Crusade.*

Similarly, some of Waterton's statements were received with a storm of derision, more especially his account of the sloth and its strange way of living; of the mode of handling deadly serpents, and above all, his ride on the back of a cayman. There is however one honourable exception in the person of Sydney Smith, who devoted one of his wittiest and happiest essays to a review of the *Wanderings* and fully recognized the extraordinary powers of Waterton.

According to Sydney Smith, Waterton "appears in early life to have been seized with an unconquerable aversion to Piccadilly, and to that train of meteorological questions and answers which forms the great staple of polite conversation. . . .

*Sydney  
Smith.*

"The sun exhausted him by day, the mosquitos bit him by night, but on went Mr. Charles Waterton. . . . happy that he had left his species far away, and is at last in the midst of his blessed baboons."

Nothing can be better than Sydney Smith's summary of the life of a sloth, who "moves suspended, rests suspended, sleeps suspended, and passes his whole life in suspense, like a young clergyman distantly related to a bishop." Or, than his simile of the box-tortoise and the boa, who "swallows him shell and all, and consumes him slowly in the interior, as the Court of Chancery does a large estate."

*Suspense.*

*Chancery.*

Or, what can be happier than the turn he gives to Waterton's account of the toucan?

"How astonishing are the freaks and fancies of nature! To what purpose, we say, is a bird placed in the forests of

*Toucan.* Cayenne, with a bill a yard long, making a noise like a puppy dog, and laying eggs in hollow trees? The Toucans, to be sure, might retort—to what purpose were gentlemen in Bond Street created? To what purpose were certain foolish, prating members of Parliament created? pestering the House of Commons with their ignorance and folly, and impeding the business of the country. There is no end of such questions. So we will not enter into the metaphysics of the toucan."

Perhaps the oddest thing to be found in criticism is that which is given in Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*. Waterton's statements having been proved to be true, the writer now turns round, and tries to show that after all there was nothing very wonderful in the achievement.

*Truth in garb of fiction.* "The crocodile in fact, is only dangerous when in the water. Upon land it is a slow-paced and even timid animal, so that an active boy armed with a small hatchet might easily despatch one. There is no great prowess therefore required to ride on the back of a poor cayman after it has been secured, or perhaps wounded; and a modern writer might well have spared the recital of his feats in this way upon the cayman of Guiana, had he not been influenced in this and numberless other instances by the greatest possible love of the marvellous, and a constant propensity to dress truth in the garb of fiction."

Putting aside the fact that the writer received some of his earliest instructions from Waterton, who was always ready to impart his knowledge to those who seemed likely to make a good use of it, the assertion is absolutely unaccountable. No man was less influenced by a love of the marvellous, and none less likely to "dress truth in the garb of fiction."

His knowledge of Nature was almost wholly obtained

from personal observation, and not one single statement of his has ever been proved to be exaggerated, much less shown to be false. He might sometimes discredit the statements of others. For example, he never could believe that any races of men could be cannibals from choice, and not from necessity or superstition. But, whether at home or abroad, his investigations were so close and patient, and his conclusions so just, that he is now acknowledged to be a guide absolutely safe in any department of Natural History which came within his scope. No one now would think of disputing Waterton's word. If he denied or even doubted the statements of others, his doubts would have great weight, and could lead to a closer investigation of the subject. But, if he asserted anything to be a fact, his assertion would be accepted without scruple.

*Personal  
observa-  
tion.*

As to the meaning of the sentence about truth and fiction, I fail to understand it, except as a poetical way of rounding a paragraph. In the first place, if truth be truth, it is essentially opposed to fiction, and cannot borrow her garb. In the next place, the writer gives no instance of this remarkable performance, except a reference to the capture of the cayman. Now, nothing can be simpler or more straightforward than Waterton's account of the whole transaction. He does not glorify himself, nor boast of his courage. He leaped astride the animal, being sure, from a knowledge of its structure, that he could not be reached by the cayman's only weapons, namely, its teeth and its tail, and he never repeated the feat.

Even the peculiar style in which Waterton wrote, could not justify such a charge as was made by Swainson.

*Style of  
writing.*

It was, perhaps unconsciously, formed on that of Sterne, many of whose phrases are employed almost verbatim. Then, his mind was saturated with Horace, Virgil, Ovid,

*Quotation.* Cervantes, Washington Irving (himself a disciple of Sterne), *Chevy Chase*, and literature of a similar character. In the days when he first took up the pen, it was the rather pedantic custom to introduce frequent quotations from the classics into writings, speeches, and sermons, and Waterton followed the custom of the day. Moreover, it is an old Stonyhurst custom to employ such quotations both in conversation and writing, and Waterton could never shake it off. But, when he came to descriptions of scenes in which he had taken part, nothing could be more simple, terse, and graphic, than his style, especially when his sense of humour was aroused. Take for example the very scene which Swainson assailed. There is no fine language in it. There are a few of the inevitable quotations, which might be omitted with advantage, but all the description is couched in the simplest and most forcible English, without a redundant word. A better word-picture does not exist in our language. We see before us the captured cayman struggling in the water, the mixed assembly of South American savages, African negroes, a Creole, and an Englishman, all puzzled to know how to get the beast ashore without damaging it, or being wounded themselves.

*Daddy Quashi.*

Then, there is the amusing cowardice of "Daddy Quashi," the negro, who ran away when suspecting danger, hung in the rear when forced to confront it, and, when it was over, "played a good finger and thumb at breakfast." Waterton's strong sense of humour prevails throughout the story, but there is not a tinge of vanity. He explains his firm seat on the furious animal's back by mentioning that he had hunted for several years with Lord Darlington's foxhounds, but he does not tell the reader that in that celebrated hunt he was considered, next to Lord Darlington, as the best horseman in the field.

*The hunting field.*

It is illustrative of Waterton's character that when the reviewers impugned his veracity, he troubled himself very little about them, saying that the creatures which he had described would one day find their way to the Zoological Gardens, and then that everybody would see that he had but spoken the truth. So, when the first sloth arrived, Waterton had quite a little triumph over his detractors. Indeed, the probability was, that, after reading one of these reviews, he would invite the assailant to Walton Hall, offer him the good old English hospitality of that place, and settle the point of dispute in friendly controversy.

But, little as he cared for such attacks, he was deeply stung by the epithet 'eccentric' which one writer applied to him, and never could forget it. *Eccentricity.*

Yet, had he not been eccentric, he could not have been the Charles Waterton so long known and loved. It was perhaps eccentric to have a strong religious faith, and act up to it. It was eccentric, as Thackeray said, to "dine on a crust, live as chastely as a hermit, and give his all to the poor." It was eccentric to come into a large estate as a young man and to have lived to extreme old age without having wasted an hour or a shilling. It was eccentric to give bountifully and never allow his name to appear in a subscription-list. It was eccentric to be saturated with the love of nature. It might be eccentric never to give dinner-parties, preferring to keep an always open house for his friends; but it was a very agreeable kind of eccentricity. It was eccentric to be ever childlike, but never childish. We might multiply instances of his eccentricity to any extent, and may safely say that the world would be much better than it is if such eccentricity were more common.

It formed one of the peculiar charms of his society, and he was utterly unconscious of it. He thought himself the



*Thought-  
fulness.*

most common-place of human beings, and yet no one could be in his company for five minutes without feeling himself in the presence of no ordinary man. He had no idea that he was doing anything out of the general course of things if he asked a visitor to accompany him to the top of a lofty tree to look at a hawk's nest; or if he built his stables so that the horses might converse with each other after their work was over, or his kennel so that his hounds should be able to see everything that was going on.

Even the pigs came in for their share of his kindly thoughtfulness. He used to say that in a wild state, swine were not dirty beasts, but that when they are penned into small sties, as is usually the case, they have no opportunity of being clean. So he had his sties built of stone, with a stone platform in front, sloping and channelled so as to be easily and thoroughly cleansed, and having a southern aspect so that the pigs might enjoy the beams of that sun which their master loved so much himself.

On these warm stone slabs they used to lie in a half-dozing state, and Waterton often used to point out the multitudinous wasps that came flying into the sties and picked off the flies from the bodies of the drowsy pigs. If the sties at Tudhoe had been like those at Walton Hall, he would not have issued from them in the highly perfumed state which he so amusingly describes. See p. 6.

*Mourning.* Some persons thought that his rooted abhorrence of mourning was eccentric. If so, the eccentricity is now shared by many, including myself, who have abandoned on principle the black crape, gloves, hat-bands, mutes, black feathers, black-edged writing paper, and other conventional signs of grief.

Waterton however carried the principle still further, and could never be induced to wear even a black coat of any

kind on any occasion. He usually wore a blue body-coat with gold—not gilt buttons, but at the urgent request of the police, who told him that his costly buttons were a perpetual anxiety to them whenever he went to Wakefield, he at last consented to lay them aside, except at home, and have his buttons covered with blue cloth. *Dress.*

This peculiarity once caused him to lose the privilege of an introduction to the Pope (Gregory XVI.). Etiquette demanded that if uniform could not be worn, the presentee must appear in ordinary evening dress. Now, had Waterton qualified as Deputy-Lieutenant, he could have followed the usual custom and worn that uniform, but as he had refused to do so, evening-dress was the only alternative. But he would not wear ‘frac-nero,’ and so lost the presentation.

On another occasion however, the difficulty was evaded in a very characteristic manner. He bethought himself of his commission in the Demerara militia ; but he had no uniform, and there was no time to make one. Some naval friends were with him, Captain Marryatt being, I believe, one of them, and with Waterton’s blue coat and gold buttons, surmounted with a pair of naval epaulettes, and with the addition of a naval captain’s cocked hat and sword, they composed an amusingly miscellaneous uniform. One friend wickedly suggested that spurs would have an imposing effect in connection with the naval hat and epaulettes, but he was not to be caught in so palpable a snare. *Uniform.*

Of his travels on the Continent, there is but little to say as they are related at some length in the three volumes of *Essays*. It is remarkable, by the way, that on the Continent, as well as in England, he met with injuries far more severe than any which he received in Guiana. *Essays.*

Twice he was nearly drowned.

*Shipwreck.* On one occasion he was on board a vessel named the *Pollux*, and bound from Civitá Vecchia to Leghorn. In the night of the same day, an accident befell the *Pollux*, almost exactly resembling that in which the ill-fated *Princess Alice* was destroyed. The night was peculiarly calm, the stars were shining brightly, and everything appeared to be in security, when all on board were startled from their sleep by a violent shock. A steamer, named the *Mongibello*, from Leghorn to Civitá Vecchia, had run into the *Pollux*, and cut her nearly in two, the cutwater of the *Mongibello* having actually forced its way into Waterton's cabin.

Fortunately for the passengers, most of them, including Waterton and his family, were sleeping on deck. As is too often the case under similar circumstances, the officials on board the offending vessel lost their presence of mind, and were actually sheering off from the wreck. Had it not been for the courage and skill of Prince Canino (Charles Bonaparte) the loss of life must have been very great.

He was a passenger on board the *Mongibello*, knocked the steersman off the wheel, took the helm himself, and laid the vessel alongside the sinking *Pollux*. Only one life was lost, that of a man who had a large sum of gold sewed in a belt round his waist, and was drawn under water by the weight.

In this shipwreck, although Waterton's life was saved, he and his party lost their wardrobes, money in cash, and letters of credit, books, writings, passports, and works of art; the last mentioned loss being irreparable. Fever and dysentery were the results of the shipwreck, and did not loosen their hold until long afterwards.

*Fall into  
the  
harbour.*

Another time, he fell into Dover harbour while about to embark on board the steamer. Any one who has walked on cliffs on a dark night is aware of the difficulty of distinguish-

ing land from water. At Margate I was once within a single step of falling over the cliff, whose edges corresponded so exactly in colour with the sea and rocks below, that, had it not been for the information conveyed by a stick, I must have been instantly killed. Several persons, indeed, have lately been killed at the same spot.

*Dangers  
of cliffs.*

Thinking that he was at the gangway, he stepped over the edge of the quay, and fell fifteen feet into the water sinking under the paddle-box, and only finding support by catching at the wheel itself. Thence he was rescued ; but the cold winds blowing on him as he stood wet and dripping on the deck of the steamer, brought on a violent attack of fever. He had recourse to his usual double remedy, the lancet and calomel, and recovered sufficiently to attend the great religious festival at Bruges, for the sake of which he had left England.

His reliance on the lancet and calomel was almost incredible. In these times the former is hardly ever used, and the latter has been abandoned by a great number of medical men. But in Waterton's early days these were the principal remedies, and he never lost faith in them. When I last saw him in 1863, he told me that he had been bled one hundred and sixty times, mostly by his own hand.

The amount of blood which he would take at a time from his spare and almost emaciated frame was positively horrifying. On this occasion he lost twenty-five ounces of blood, and next morning took twenty grains of jalap, mixed with ten grains of calomel. It was no wonder that the vampire bat of Guiana would never bite him, though he left his foot invitingly out of the hammock in order to attract it. He used to complain that the bat never could be induced to bleed him, though it would attack a man lying in the next hammock ; but he might have antici-

*Lancet and  
Calomel.*

*Vampire.*

pated that the vampire would know better than to try to suck blood from a man who was constantly bleeding himself.

Besides these accidents by water, he twice suffered severe injuries when travelling by land.

*Broken  
glass.*

In 1818, while returning over Mount Cenis, he fancied that the baggage on the top of the carriage was loose, and mounted on the wheel to examine it. Unfortunately his left knee broke the window, and two large pieces of glass ran into it just above the knee-joint. In spite of the darkness, he contrived to get out the two pieces of glass, bound up the wound with his cravat, cut off his coat pocket, and had it filled with poultice at the nearest house, and, although repeatedly attacked with fever, he reached Paris and there gained strength to return to England. The knee remained stiff for two years, but by continual exercise without the aid of a walking-stick, the limb recovered its normal flexibility.

The next accident might have been nearly as serious, and is here given in his own words :—

*Barefoot  
walk to  
Rome.*

“I had a little adventure on the road from Baccano to Rome not worth relating, but which I deem necessary to be introduced here in order that some of my friends in the latter city, and others in England, may not give me credit for an affair which deserves no credit at all. These good friends had got it into their heads that I had reached Rome after walking barefoot for nearly twenty miles, in order to show my respect and reverence for the sacred capital of the Christian world. Would that my motive had been as pure as represented. The sanctity of the churches, the remains of holy martyrs which enrich them, the relics of canonised saints placed in such profusion throughout them, might well induce a Catholic traveller to adopt this easy and simple mode of showing his religious



feeling. But, unfortunately, the idea never entered my mind at the time. I had no other motives than those of easy walking and self-enjoyment. The affair which caused the talk took place as follows :—

“ We had arrived at Baccano in the evening, and whilst we were at tea, I proposed to our excellent friend Mr. Fletcher, who had joined us at Cologne, that we should leave the inn at four the next morning on foot to Rome, and secure lodgings for the ladies, who would follow us in the carriage after a nine-o'clock breakfast. Having been accustomed to go without shoes month after month in the rugged forests of Guiana, I took it for granted that I could do the same on the pavement of his Holiness Pope Gregory the Sixteenth, never once reflecting that some fifteen years had elapsed from the time that I could go barefooted with comfort and impunity ; during the interval, however, the sequel will show that the soles of my feet had undergone a considerable alteration. *Baccano.*

“ We rose at three the morning after, and having put a shoe and a sock or half-stocking into each pocket of my coat, we left the inn at Baccano for Rome just as the hands of our watches pointed to the hour of four. Mr. Fletcher, having been born in North Britain, ran no risk of injuring his feet by an act of imprudence. The sky was cloudless and the morning frosty, and the planet Venus shone upon us as though she had been a little moon.

“ Whether the severity of the frost, which was more than commonly keen, or the hardness of the pavement, or perhaps both conjoined, had deprived my feet of sensibility, I had no means of ascertaining ; but this is certain, I went on merrily for several miles without a suspicion of anything being wrong, until we halted to admire more particularly the transcendent splendour of the morning planet, and then I saw blood on the pavement ; my right foot was bleeding *Wounded foot.*

*Repairing  
damages.*

apace, and, on turning the sole uppermost, I perceived a piece of jagged flesh hanging by a string. Seeing that there would be no chance of replacing the damaged part with success, I twisted it off, and then took a survey of the foot by the light which the stars afforded.

“Mr. Fletcher, horror-struck at what he saw, proposed immediately that I should sit down by the side of the road, and there wait for the carriage, or take advantage of any vehicle which might come up. Aware that the pain would be excessive so soon as the lacerated parts would become stiff by inaction, I resolved at once to push on to Rome, wherefore, putting one shoe on the sound foot, which, by the way, had two unbroken blisters on it, I forced the wounded one into the other, and off we started for Rome, which we reached after a very uncomfortable walk. The injured foot had two months’ confinement to the sofa before the damage was repaired.

“It was this unfortunate adventure which gave rise to the story of my walking barefooted into Rome, and which gained me a reputation by no means merited on my part.”

Two more serious accidents occurred within his own domains.

*Accident  
while  
shooting.*

He was out shooting in 1824, when the gun exploded just as he was ramming the wad on the powder. Fortunately the charge of shot had not been put into the gun. As it was, the ramrod was driven completely through the forefinger of the right hand, between the knuckle and first joint, severing the tendons, but not breaking the bone, though the ignited wadding and powder followed the ramrod through the wound. He procured some warm water at a neighbouring house, washed the wound quite clean, replaced the tendons in their proper positions, and bound up the finger, taking care to give it its proper form.

Of course the lancet was used freely, and by dint of

poulticing and constant care, the full use of the finger was restored.

The other accident might have caused his death on the spot, and was a far more severe one than that by which he afterwards lost his life.

In 1850, he being then in his sixty-ninth year, he was mounted on a ladder for the purpose of pruning the branches of a pear-tree. The ladder, which was merely propped against a machine of his own invention, slipped sideways, and came to the ground, Waterton having fallen nearly twenty feet. *Fall while pruning.*

He had been repeatedly warned that the machine, not having side stays, must fall if the weight were thrown on one side. But he still persisted in using it, although, shortly before the accident, his son had left the spot, saying that he could not be responsible for an accident which he foresaw but could not prevent. He was partially stunned, and his arm greatly injured, the heavy ladder and machine having fallen into the hollow and smashed the elbow-joint.

His first act on recovering himself was to use his lancet and take away thirty ounces of blood. Unfortunately a second accident happened almost immediately after the first, a servant having thoughtlessly withdrawn a chair just as he was seating himself, and so causing a second shock, and the loss of thirty ounces more blood.

For some time, he lay insensible and was apparently dying fast, but his iron constitution at length prevailed, and he was restored to life, though not to health. The injured arm was gradually dwindling in size, and gave continual pain, causing loss of sleep and appetite. He had at last resolved on having the arm amputated, when his gamekeeper advised him to try a certain bone-setter living at Wakefield, who was celebrated for his cures. *A second fall.*

*The Bone-setter.*

Waterton took his advice and sent for the practitioner, Mr. J. Crowther, who decided that he could cure the injured limb, but at the expense of great pain. The wrist was much injured, a callus had formed in the elbow-joint, and the shoulder was partially dislocated. After a time spent in rubbing, pulling, and twisting, he got the shoulder and wrist into their places, and then, grasping the arm "just above the elbow with one hand, and below it with the other, he smashed to atoms, by main force, the callus which had formed in the dislocated joint, the elbow itself cracking as though the interior parts of it had consisted of tobacco-pipe shanks."

*Painful operation.*

The process was rough, and gave inexpressible pain, but it was effectual, sleep and appetite returned, and health was soon restored.

From this accident Waterton drew a characteristic warning, namely, never to use ladders when climbing trees.

One, if not the principal reason of his cessation from tropical explorations, was his marriage. In 1829, he married Anne, a daughter of the Charles Edmonstone, of Demerara, who is often mentioned in the *Wanderings* as a kind and true friend.

*Marriage.*

His marriage has a curiously romantic history.

*Princess Minda.*

Mr. Charles Edmonstone, one of the Edmonstones of Broich in Scotland, had previously gone to Demerara, where he met a fellow-countryman, William Reid of Banffshire, who had settled there, and had married Minda (generally called Princess Minda), daughter of an Arowak chief. Charles Edmonstone married Helen, daughter of William Reid and Minda, and they had several children, one of whom, Anne Mary, became the wife of Waterton. He met her in Demerara, while she was yet a child, and made up his mind that she should be his wife.

Mr. Edmonstone afterwards returned with his family to

Scotland, and purchased Cardross Park, an old family estate that had formed a portion of the dower of one of his royal ancestors; Sir John Edmonstone, who married the Princess Isabel, daughter of Robert II. of Scotland; and Sir William Edmonstone his son, who married his cousin, the Princess Mary, daughter of Robert III.

*Cardross  
Park.*

Through this branch, Edmund Waterton, the present head of the family, is descended lineally from Leofric and Godiva, whose romantic legend is, I regret to say, wholly a myth. It was impossible that she could have ridden through Coventry, for the same reason that, according to the old song, prevented Guy Faux from crossing Vauxhall Bridge on his way "to perpetrate his guilt." Coventry was not in existence at the time.

*Godiva.*

There is, however, some foundation for the legend. Godiva was a lady possessing vast wealth, with which she determined to found and endow an abbey. This she did, "stripping herself of all that she had," and thence the legend. Coventry gradually arose round the abbey, and had no streets, and consequently no tolls, until Godiva had been dead at least a century.

On the death of Charles Edmonstone and his wife, their three daughters, Eliza, Anne Mary, and Helen, were sent to the well-known convent of Bruges, for the purpose of completing their education, and, in the Convent Church, Waterton was married to Anne, on May 11, 1829, she being then only seventeen, and he forty-eight. There is an old Scotch proverb to the effect that a bride of one May will never see a second. It was but too true in this case, for Anne Mary Waterton died on April 27, 1830, twenty-one days after giving birth to a son.

*The con-  
vent of  
Bruges.*

*Death of  
Anne  
Waterton.*

Through him it is to be hoped that a line so interwoven with ancient history, and so prominent in modern times, will not be broken. He married Josephine, second daughter



*Edmund Waterton.* of Sir John Ennis, Bart., of Ballinahown Court, Co. Westmeath, Ireland. He has issue,—Two sons, Charles Edmund, now a student at Stonyhurst, and Thomas More. Four daughters, Mary, Agnes, Amabil (who died a few months after her birth), and Josephine.

Waterton could never bear to speak of his wife, but he needed help in the care of his infant son. For this purpose, he asked her two sisters, the Misses Eliza and Helen Edmonstone to take up their abode with him. This they did to the hour of his death, and he often wrote with affectionate gratitude of their devotion to him.

He yearned to go back again to the wilds of Guiana, but considered that his child had prior claims upon him, and so, according to his invariable custom, he sacrificed inclination to duty.

### CHAPTER III.

Magnificence and money.—Waterton's mode of life and personal expenses.

—Sleeping on planks.—His visits to the chapel.—The "morning gun."  
—The razor and the lancet.—Reduction of the family estates.—His work at Walton Hall.—Natural advantages of the place.—The wall and its cost.—Bargees and their guns.—Instinct of the herons.—Hérons and fish-ponds.—Drainage of the ponds.—The moat extended into a lake.—Old Gateway and Ivy-Tower.—Siege by Oliver Cromwell.—Tradition of a musket-ball.—Draw-bridge and gateway in the olden times.—Tradition of a cannon-ball.—Both ball and cannon discovered.—Sunken plate and weapons.—Echo at Walton Hall.—West view of lake.—How to strengthen a bank.—Pike-catching.—Cats and pike.—Spot where Waterton fell.

WATERTON AT HOME, and, what a home !

*At home.*

It was not magnificent in the ordinary sense of the word. Such magnificence may be the result of mere wealth, without either taste, imagination, or appreciation. The veriest boor in existence, who happens by some turn of fortune to be put in possession of enormous wealth, need only give the word, and he may revel in more than royal magnificence.

As for the house itself, no expenditure could give it the least pretence to beauty or stateliness. It is one of the worst specimens of the worst era of architecture, and is nothing but a stone box perforated with rows of oblong holes by way of windows.

*Walton  
Hall.*

I tried on all sides to obtain a view of it which would soften down its ugliness, but could not succeed. The

front of the house is, strange to say, the worst part of it, being a flat, smooth, stone wall, with three rows of oblong windows, eight in a row. The only specimen of architecture which could approach it in this respect is a work-house of the same date, those of modern times being infinitely superior in architectural effect.

Why the grand old house should have been pulled down to make way for such an edifice is quite inexplicable.



WALTON HALL, FROM THE LAKE.

*The old house.*

Very few houses will be found with an oak-panelled hall ninety feet in length. Yet all this was destroyed ; part of the oak-panelling was used in building a pigeon-house, and the rest was burned. Such was the state of architecture in the days "when George the Third was king."

Unfortunately, no paintings or engravings of this most memorable house are in existence, though there are innumerable plates of the "Seats of the Nobility and

Gentry," most of them in the style satirized by Hogarth in his "Marriage à la Mode."

In fact, the architecture of that era is on a par with the classical costumes of the stage. I have possessed for many years a volume of Shakspeare in which there is a portrait of an actor in the part of Troilus. He is classically costumed as a Trojan in a tight scale cuirass, a short cloak, knee breeches and silk stockings, Roman buskins, a tie wig, a helmet with a vast plume of ostrich feathers, and he is bidding defiance to Diomedes with a toy Moorish sword which would hardly cut off the head of a wax doll.

*Architecture and the stage.*

So if Waterton had desired architectural magnificence, he could not have obtained it, except by pulling the house down, and building another. But, he had no taste for such magnificence, his life being one of rigid, not to say severe, simplicity.

His personal expenses were such as could have been covered by the wages of one of the labourers on his own estate. His single room had neither bed nor carpet. He always lay on the bare boards with a blanket wrapped round him, and with an oaken block by way of a pillow. As has been mentioned, he never touched fermented liquids of any kind, and he took but very little meat.

*Simplicity of life.*

When I knew him, he always retired to his room at 8 P.M. Few men of his age would have chosen a room at the very top of a large house; but stairs were nothing to Waterton, whose limbs were strengthened by perpetual tree climbing. Punctually at three A.M., being roused by the crowing of a huge Cochin China cock, which he called his 'morning gun,' he rose from his plank couch, lighted his fire, lay down for half an hour, and was always dressed and closely, or as he called it, 'clean' shaven, by four, when he went into the private chapel which was

*The morning gun.*

next door to his room, and where he usually spent an hour in prayer.

*Razor and  
lancet.*

I had several friendly altercations with him upon shaving, but he would as soon give up the lancet as the razor. He would not even wear a particle of whisker, and kept his thick, snowy hair within half an inch of length. He had not lost a hair, in spite of his advanced age, and I have often thought that if he had allowed his hair and beard to grow to their full luxuriance, a nobler figure could not have visited an artist's dreams.

Then came reading Latin and Spanish books (Don Quixote being always one), and then writing, receiving bailiff's report, &c., until eight, when, at the stroke of Sir Thomas More's clock, breakfast was served. So, he had done a fair day's work and finished breakfast at the time when most persons of his position in life had scarcely awoke.

In the next place, he was not a rich man.

*Diminution of the  
estate.*

As a rule, the old Yorkshire families are wealthy, and the Watertons would have been among the wealthiest of them, but for the shameful oppressions to which they were subjected. That most accomplished robber, Henry VIII., had confiscated the greater part of the estates, and what with direct robberies, double taxation, fines, and so forth, the estates were terribly reduced when he came into possession of them. Even if he had wished it, magnificence would not have been attainable, but he achieved more than magnificence, and with the restricted means at his command, converted a Yorkshire valley into a veritable wonder-land.

In this congenial task he was favoured by circumstances which are not likely to occur again. He possessed the requisite knowledge, a constitution of iron, and a frame of astonishing endurance and activity. He came into possession of the estate as a very young man, only twenty-



four years of age, and remained absolute master for nearly sixty years.

It was a pity that he did not bestow as much pains on his estate as on his birds. But he was no practical agriculturist as his father had been. He could not do anything which looked like oppressing his tenants, and the consequence was, that they were habitually in heavy arrears, and often threw up their farms without paying rent, having impoverished the land and enriched themselves.

*Birds  
versus  
rental.*

He loved natural history in all its forms, but his chief pursuit was the study of bird-life, and he modified the grounds to the use of the birds, caring much more for their comfort than his own. For this purpose the grounds were admirably adapted by Nature, and he aided her by art. There were a large moat and a succession of ponds for the accommodation of aquatic birds. There were swampy places where the birds could feed. There were ruined edifices for such birds as chose them for a residence, and the whole of the park was covered with stately trees. Moreover, the house stood on a stone island in the moat, and, as may be seen from the illustration on page 36, permitted the habits of the water-birds to be closely watched.

The first need was obviously to allow the birds to be undisturbed by boys and other intruders, and to prohibit the firing of guns—the only sound which birds seem instinctively to dread. But, as there was a public pathway running in front of the house, he had great difficulty in obtaining permission to close it. This object, however, was at last attained, and he then began his wall. It is of a roughly circular form, the house being near the centre. Nowhere is it less than eight feet high, and where it runs along the canal, it is more than double that height, in order to protect the birds from the guns of bargees.

*The Park  
wall.*

*Barges.* These men, by the way, used to be most determined poachers, and, on account of their mode of life, even if detected and chased, they could escape by means of their barges. They were chary, however, of venturing inside a sixteen feet wall, and after a while ceased from troubling. Such a work was necessarily very expensive, costing at least ten thousand pounds. It was too large a sum to be paid at once, and Waterton would not run in debt. So, every year, he put aside as much money as could be spared for the wall, went on building until the money was expended, and then stopped the work, and waited until the following year to continue it. The wall was three miles in total length, and inclosed an area of two hundred and fifty-nine acres.

*Heronry.* The value of this wall was shown by the fact that the very year after it was finished the herons came and established themselves within it. At my last visit in 1863, there were nearly forty nests.

How should they know that a wall could protect them against man? It was no obstacle to them, and how they could have known, as they evidently did, that it was an obstacle to mankind is one of the yet unsolved problems which puzzle students of zoology. Moreover, they knew that those few specimens of humanity who came within the wall would do them no harm. I have often been in the heronry, with the blue fragments of broken eggs lying on the ground, and seen the herons going to and from their home with perfect unconcern. Even on the ground, the herons had no fear of man. Provided that a man approached them slowly and quietly, he could come close enough to see their eyes, and even to notice the reflection of the rippling water upon their grey plumage.

Not only in the heronry, but in other parts of the park near the water, the birds would allow themselves to be

approached quite closely, so that their peculiar habits *Tameness of Herons.* could be watched. I was able to secure slight sketches of the characteristic, and almost grotesque attitudes assumed by the heron, and have selected three as examples.

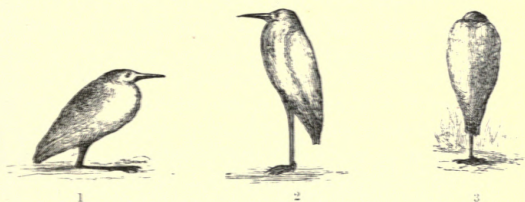


Fig. 1 shows the bird in a position which, in common with the flamingo, stork, and other long-legged wading birds, it is fond of assuming. It doubles its legs under the body, thrusts the feet forward, sinks its head upon its shoulders, so as to conceal the long neck, and remains so motionless and so unlike a heron that it might easily be passed without notice.

Fig. 2 shows the heron standing on one leg at rest. By moving cautiously round the bird, I succeeded in getting a back view, so as to show the perfect balance of the body on the single leg (Fig. 3).

Waterton had a special love for the heron, and frequently alludes to the services which it renders to the owners of fish-ponds.

"Formerly we had a range of fish-ponds here, one above the other, covering a space of about three acres of ground. Close by them ran a brook, from which the water-rats made regular passages through the intervening bank into the ponds. These vermin were engaged in never-ceasing mischief. No sooner was one hole repaired than another was made; so that we had the mortification to see

*Old fish-ponds.*

*Water-rats.*

the ponds generally eight or ten inches below water-mark. This encouraged the growth of weeds to a most incommodious extent, which at last put an end to all pleasure in fishing. Finding that the 'green mantle from the standing pool' was neither useful nor pleasant, I ordered the ponds to be drained, and a plantation to be made in the space of ground which they had occupied.

*Value of  
heron.*

"Had I known as much then as I know now of the valuable services of the heron, and had there been a good heronry near the place, I should not have made the change. The draining of the ponds did not seem to lessen the number of rats in the brook; but soon after the herons had settled here to breed, the rats became extremely scarce; and now I rarely see one in the place, where formerly I could observe numbers sitting on the stones at the mouth of their holes, as soon as the sun had gone down below the horizon. I often watch the herons on the banks of some other store-ponds with feelings of delight; and nothing would grieve me more than to see the lives of these valuable and ornamental birds sacrificed to the whims and caprices of man."

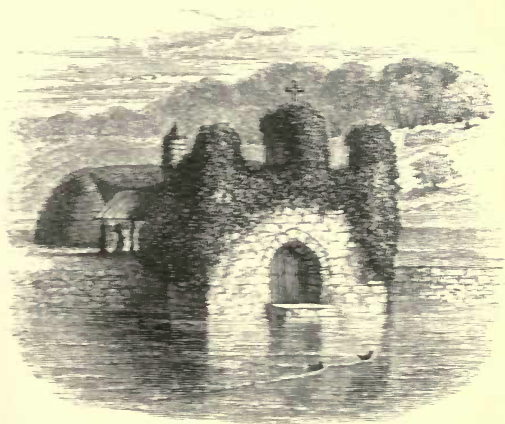
A portion of one of these now dry fish-ponds may be seen in the illustration of the "Grotto," on page 68. On such a rich soil as that afforded by the bed of an old fish-pond, the trees grew with great rapidity, and the spot is now a singularly picturesque one, with bold effects of light and shade, and shelter from the wind and sun.

The next important work was the extension of the moat, a long and costly operation.

The present house is comparatively modern, standing well clear of the water. But, the original house extended to the water on the south side, and was a fortified building of sufficient strength to justify a siege under Cromwell's personal direction.

Unfortunately, Waterton's father destroyed this historical building to make room for the present house, and almost the only relic of this fortification is the old gateway, with its central tower and flanking turrets, and said to be more than a thousand years of age.

The gate itself is of very thick oak planking, pierced with loopholes for musketry, and bearing tangible evidences *The gateway.*



GATEWAY AND ITS TOWER.

of the siege in the shape of many bullet marks. In the left portion of the gate there is a ball still remaining, which is distinguished by an iron ring round it bearing an inscription to the effect that it was fired by Oliver Cromwell himself. *Oliver Cromwell.* That he took an active part in the siege is well known, but it is difficult to identify any individual bullet which he



*Raising  
the siege.*

fired. The tradition further states that the shot was aimed at the lady of the house, who gallantly conducted the defence herself. The reader may be interested to hear that her defence was successful.

The sketch, representing the Gateway in its present condition, was taken on the opposite side of the water, from a spot close to the tall and lightning-shattered poplar-tree, shown on the right hand of the illustration on p. 36. The chief interest of this view lies in the gateway itself. Just behind it is an odd-looking tower, which was built by Waterton for the use of starlings, and the place is enclosed on the north by a thick and closely-clipped hedge of yew. The heavy masses of ivy which fall in thick clusters from the turrets and which serve as a refuge for many birds, have given to the structure the name of Ivy Tower, by which it is often mentioned in the Essays.

While still very young, I was familiar with the Ivy Tower from Waterton's Essays. They mostly appeared in Loudon's *Magazine of Natural History*, and as that valuable publication was taken in at the Ashmolean Society of Oxford, where I lived, I used to watch impatiently for each successive number, in the hope that it might contain an article from Waterton's pen. Thus, the gateway, the lake, the heronry, the starling towers, the fallen millstone, the shattered poplar, the holly hedges and the wooden pheasants, were all known to me, and when at last I had the privilege of visiting Walton Hall, there was not one of those spots that I did not joyfully recognize.

*Draw-  
bridge.*

In the old times, the only approach to the mainland was by a drawbridge, opening on to the gateway, which was then three stories high. This has long been destroyed, and at present the approach is made by a light iron bridge, rather to the right of the gateway. This bridge is not shown in the sketch.

As to the siege, there are other reminiscences beside the gateway itself.

While the soldiers of Cromwell were occupying the hill nearly opposite the gateway, one of the soldiers started off with a keg on his shoulder to fetch beer from the village. Thinking that he would return by the same route, one of the garrison aimed a little gun which was mounted on the topmost story, so as to command the path. The soldier did return by the same way, and was struck down by the ball, which passed through his thigh.

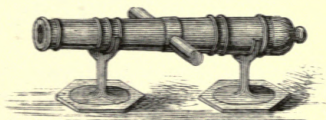
*A good shot.*

The tradition of this lucky shot was handed down from father to son, until it reached Waterton's father. He had the curiosity to dig at the spot where the man was said to have fallen, and there he found the ball, a little iron one. This he gave to his son, with a request that it should always remain in the family.

*The ball.*

In 1857, while dredging away the drift mud which had accumulated round the gateway, a small iron cannon was discovered. As the ball fitted it, and it was found exactly below the turret from which the fatal shot had been fired, there could be no doubt that it was the identical gun

*The cannon.*



CULVERIN.

mentioned in the tradition; so Waterton had the pleasure of placing the cannon and the ball together in his house, where every visitor could see them.

Beside the gun, there were found a sword-blade, a spear, daggers, axe, many coins, keys, and some silver plate. For their presence in the mud Waterton accounts by

*Sunken weapons and plate.*

suggesting that they were flung into the moat, when the house was ransacked for arms after the battle of Culloden. He told me that he believed that if the lake were completely drained, many more such articles would be recovered.

*Echo  
Stone.*

The view on page 36 is taken from a spot on the northern bank. At some hundreds of yards distance from the house there are a couple of splendid sycamores, and close to them is a large block of ironstone, called the Echo Stone. Any one standing by it, and speaking towards the house, will hear every syllable returned with wonderful clearness. Sitting on this stone, I made the sketch from which this illustration is taken. On it is engraved the word ECHO.

On the western side of the gateway there had been a curious old chapel formerly attached to the mansion. Waterton, however, disliked it and took it down, against the remonstrances of the then Duke of Norfolk, his godfather.

The lake is widest near the house, and then proceeds almost due west, narrowing as it goes, and taking a turn northwards towards the end, where it passes round a hill, and becomes shallower, allowing the sedges and reeds to appear, and so affording shelter for the aquatic birds.

Another view of the lake is now given, looking westward, and taken from the right-hand first floor window of the house as seen on page 36.

On the ground-floor may be seen a large window, flanked by a smaller one on either side. These are the west windows of the drawing-room. The central window is a large sheet of plate glass, and behind it is mounted a large telescope, commanding nearly the whole of the lake.

*The  
willows.*

On the left, before coming to the wood, are a few willows, and between them and the wood is a favourite resort of the herons. The low bank looks as if it would be endangered by the water, but it is perfectly firm, even to the very edge. It is made of large stones, not squared,

but heaped loosely together. Seeds of various trees, especially those of the sycamore, fell into the water, floated on its surface, and were arrested by the bank, where they took root. They were never allowed to grow into trees, and were constantly cut down. But their roots twined themselves among the stones, and bound them together so firmly, that a stronger wall could not be desired.

*Water-wall.*



LAKE, LOOKING WESTWARD.

The holes under these stones are favourite resorts of pike, with which the lake abounds.

I am no angler, but I have caught many pike near the willows by trolling, using nothing but a willow stick by way of rod, a hank of whipcord for a line, a gorge hook, and a minnow for bait. The largest that I ever took there weighed rather over ten pounds, and very proud I was of the fish, though it was a heavy and inconvenient article to carry to the house.

*Pike.*

Some of the pike, including the ten-pounder, were for

*Cat  
feeding.*

the table, but the fish were generally used for the purpose of feeding the cats, of which there were many about the stables and cattle-yards, for the purpose of keeping down the rats. It is now well known that a well-fed cat is the best mouser, seldom eating its prey, but killing it for the mere sport.

When the cats were fed, the fish were chopped up on a wooden block near the stables. It was very amusing to watch the operation. Although at first not a cat might be visible, half a dozen blows had not been struck with the chopper before impatient cries were heard, and cats came swarming round the block, just as they do round a cat's-meat man's barrow in London.

*The fatal  
spot.*

On the right, just above the tall tree near the edge of the lake, a heron is seen flying in the distance. It was near the bank at the further end of the lake that Waterton met with his fatal accident at a spot nearly below the flying heron.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Love of trees.*—Preservation of damaged trees.—How trees perish.—Wind and rain.—Self-restorative powers of the bark.—Hidden foes.—The fungus and its work.—Use of the woodpecker and titmouse.—How to utilize tree-stumps.—The Cole Titmouse.—Owl-house and seat.—Dry-rot.—When to paint timber.—Oaken gates of the old tower.—Command over trees.—How to make the holly grow quickly.—The holly as a hedge-tree.—Pheasant fortresses.—Artificial pheasants.—The poachers outwitted.—Waterton's power of tree-climbing.—An aerial study.—Ascending and descending trees.—Church and State trees.—The yew.—A protection against cold winds.—Yew hedge at back of gateway.—The Starling Tower.—Familiarity of the birds.—The Picnic or Grotto.—Waterton's hospitality.—“The Squire”—A decayed mill and abandoned stone.—The stone lifted off the ground by a hazel nut.

WATERTON's love of trees almost amounted to veneration. He studied their ways as minutely and as accurately as he did those of the animal world, and in consequence he could do more with trees than any one else. By patient observation of their modes of growth, he knew how to plant them in the locality best suited for themselves, how to encourage them, and, if they were injured, to reduce their damage to a minimum.

*Love of  
trees.*

Many a fine tree has he shown me which would have been long ago condemned by ignorant men, but which was then flourishing in full growth, and in such renewed health that scarcely a scar was left in the bark to show the spot on which the injury had occurred.

One of his triumphs in this art was to be seen by a splendid poplar situated nearly opposite the picturesque

*Healing a gateway poplar.* and especially favoured by Waterton as having been planted by his father. It was twice struck by lightning, and the trunk split open for many feet.

However, Waterton filled up the breaches, and in course of time the tree recovered itself (see p. 36). It was in full growth during my last visit, but it was blown down by a severe gale in 1869, having succumbed, not to the lightning, but to age. To heal a tree by filling it with bricks and mortar may appear to be rather a singular method, but it is a very effectual one; the chief object being to keep rain out of the tree, and so to guard it against rotting.

How thoroughly Waterton had studied the ways of trees may be seen from the following extract from his essay on the Titmouse and the Woodpecker, in which he combated the popular opinion that these birds were injurious to trees :—

*Tree climbing.*

“Would you inspect the nest of a carrion crow? Brittle are the living branches of the ash and sycamore; while, on the contrary, those which are dead on the Scotch pine are tough, and will support your weight. The arms of the oak may safely be relied on; but, I pray you, trust with extreme caution those of the quick-growing alder. Neither press heavily on the linden tree; though you may ascend the beech and the elm without any fear of danger. But let us stop here for the present. On some future day, should I be in a right frame for it, I may pen down a few remarks, which will possibly be useful to the naturalist when roving in quest of ornithological knowledge. I will now confine myself to the misfortunes and diseases of trees; and I will show that neither the titmouse nor the woodpecker ever bore into the hard and live wood.

“Trees, in general, are exposed to decay by two different processes, independent of old age. The first is that of a broken branch, which, when neglected, or not cut off close to the

parent stem, will, in the course of time, bring utter ruin on the tree. The new wood, which is annually formed, cannot grow over the jutting and fractured part, into which the rain enters, and gradually eats deeper and deeper, till at last it reaches the trunk itself. There it makes sad havoc ; and the tree, no longer able to resist the fury of the tempest, is split asunder, and falls in ponderous ruins. But ere it comes to this, the titmouse will enter the cavity in a dry spring, and rear its young ones here. Now, if the diseased or fractured branches were carefully cut off close to the bole, you would see the new accession of wood gradually rolling over the flat surface, which, in time, would be entirely covered by it ; and then the tree would be freed for ever from all danger in that quarter. The second process towards decay is exceedingly curious, and cannot well be accounted for. If it takes place to a serious extent, no art of man can possibly save the tree ; and sooner or later, according to the magnitude of the disease with which it has been tainted, it will fall before the force of the raging winds. Should this disease be slight, the timely prevention of rain from penetrating the injured part will secure the tree from further mischief.

*Decay of  
trees.*

“ I must here observe that, in animated nature, the vital functions are internal ; so that, if the part within be mortally wounded, death is the inevitable consequence. With most trees, and with all those of Britain, it is otherwise. Their vitality is at the periphery, connected with the bark, under which an annual increase of wood takes place, so long as the tree is alive. Should, however, the bark be cut away, the tree will die upwards from the place where all the bark has been destroyed. Not so with its internal parts. You may entirely excavate the interior of a tree ; and provided you leave a sufficient strength of wood by way of wall, in order that it may be able to resist the

*Vitality of  
the bark.*

fury of the tempest without, taking care at the same time to exclude the rain, your tree will remain in vigour from generation to generation.

“The internal texture of a tree will perish without any notice by which we may be forewarned of the coming ruin. The disease which causes the destruction takes place in the oak ; but more frequently in the sycamore, and most commonly of all in the ash. We will select this last tree by way of elucidation.

*Fatal  
fungus.*

“Often, when arrayed in all the bloom of vegetable beauty, the ash-tree is seen to send forth from its bole, or from some principal branch, a small fungus, which, during the summer, increases to a considerable size. It ripens in the autumn, and falls to the ground when winter’s rain sets in. The bark through which this fungus sprouted is now completely dead, though it still retains its colour ; and that part of the wood from which it proceeded is entirely changed in its nature, the whole of its vitiated juices having been expended in forming and nourishing the fungus. Nothing remains of its once firm and vigorous texture. It is become what is commonly called touch-wood, as soft and frangible as a piece of cork, which, when set on fire, will burn like tinder. In the meantime, the tree shows no sign of sickness, and its annual increase goes on as usual, till at last the new swelling wood closes over the part from which the fungus had grown, and all appears to go on right again. But ere the slow process arrives at this state the titmouse or the woodpecker will have found an entrance and a place of safety for their incubation. They quickly perforate the distempered bark, and then the tainted wood beneath it yields to their pointed bills, with which they soon effect a spacious cavity.

“Here, then, we have the whole mystery unfolded. These

birds, which never perforate the live wood, find in this diseased part of the tree, or of the branch, a place suitable to their wants. They make a circular hole large enough to admit their bodies, and then they form a cavity within sufficiently spacious to contain their young. Thus does nature kindly smooth the way in order that all her creatures may prosper and be happy. Whenever I see these sylvan carpenters thus employed I say to them, 'Work on, ye pretty birds; you do no harm in excavating there. I am your friend, and I will tell the owner of the tree that you are not to blame. But his woodman deserves a severe reprimand. He ought to have cut down the tree in the autumn, after the appearance of the fungus.' "

*Wood-  
peckers.*

Even when the tree was hopelessly destroyed by the fungus, Waterton would still find uses for the stump. He would clothe it with ivy so as to render it picturesque, and he would manipulate it so that it should be a home for birds.

*Tree  
stumps.*

Many of these stumps are in the grounds, and of them I have selected one or two as examples.

The first shows the "brick and mortar" system which has already been mentioned. Several habitations for birds are constructed in it, and the stone in front is intended to aid the observer in looking into the nests. I tried to sketch this stump so as not to make it look like a grotesque human face. But exactness was the first consideration, and it is represented precisely as it was in 1863.

*Brick and  
mortar.*

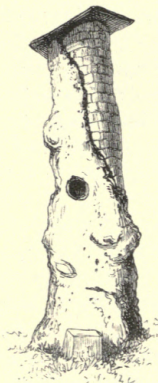
The second sketch was chosen because it represents one of the fungus-visited ash-trees described by Waterton.

*Old ash.*

The tree has been broken off some ten feet from the ground, at a spot weakened by a fungus. Of the tree itself little remains except the broken stump and a few small branches which still retain their leaves. Ivy has ascended



it, and is hanging in heavy clusters, so as to give the fast-dying tree a verdure not its own. And, as the reader may observe, two more masses of fungus are projecting from the tree and extracting the life from its fibres.



DECAYED ASH AND BRICK.

Just above the upper fungus and on its right is a small door, with a hole near the top, and this little door has rather a curious history.

*The Cole-titmouſe.*

In the ſpot where the door is ſhown there is a fungus, proving that the wood from which it has ſprung was decayed. Now, Waterton had for ſome time wanted the Cole-titmouſe to breed in his park, and, in accordance with this notion, provided it with a home. Firſt, he ſeparated an oblong piece of wood about an inch in thickneſs ſo as to form a door. Next, he cut away the ſoft decayed wood until he had formed a conſiderable cavity. He then

replaced the door, fastening it with two little hinges and a hasp, and bored a hole in it about an inch in diameter.

In fulfilment of his expectations, the very bird which he wanted soon discovered the locality, examined it carefully, and then built in the chamber so thoughtfully provided



*A  
feathered  
lodger.*

DECAYED ASH AND FUNGUS.

for it. I was never at Walton Hall while the bird was sitting, but have often seen the nest.

The last of these sketches represents a singularly ingenious combination of accommodation for man and bird. The trunk of an old oak-tree has been hollowed out, and the interior is divided into two stories.

In the upper there are nesting-places for birds, especially for owls, and in the lower there is a seat where the occupant can remain unseen. It is placed on the brow of the hill which borders the lake, and is so arranged that not

only can the observer watch from its shelter the habits of *Owl-house*. the various aquatic beings which frequent the lake, but can actually look into the nests built on the tops of lofty



OWL HOUSE AND SEAT.

trees without the birds suspecting that their movements could be seen.

*Dry-rot.* With regard to the decay of wood after it had been felled, Waterton was not long in coming to the conclusion that the "dry-rot," as it is oddly named, was caused not so much by external moisture as by the natural sap of the tree which had not been thoroughly expelled. When its juices have been completely dried and it is thoroughly "seasoned," wood is as lasting as stone. We have in the British Museum specimens of woodwork which, although more than three thousand years have elapsed since the trees were felled, are as sound as when they were first carved. Waterton used to say that paint was the chief cause of dry rot, especially when it was used to cover the deficiencies of ill-seasoned wood, because it closed the pores and did not allow the sap to escape. As a proof

that weather does not injure well-seasoned wood, he was wont to point to certain posts, gates, and other articles made of oak, which had never been painted, and which had been in the open air for some seven hundred years, and were perfectly sound. The oak doors of the gateway are fully seven hundred years old. They are pierced and torn with musket-balls, but are still free from decay.

*Paint.*

When he had new doors made which would be exposed to the weather he used every precaution to keep the wet from lodging in them. No panels were seen on the outer side, which was as smooth as it could be made. The corners were bound with strong iron, painted before it was put on.

No matter how well-seasoned the wood might be, if the doors were made of deal, three years were allowed to elapse before painting, while, if of oak, it was never painted until six years had passed, and very often was not painted at all. It is also found that if holes were bored transversely into posts, so as to allow free entrance of air, the dry-rot scarcely ever made its appearance. If modern builders would act upon a knowledge of this fact they would render our houses, roofs of buildings, &c., far more enduring than they are at present.

*Seasoned wood.*

DID we wish to show the wonderful command which Waterton had over trees, we need only point to the holly-trees in his park. The holly was a great favourite of his, as it is very hardy when properly planted, possesses a remarkable beauty of its own, affords shelter for birds in winter as well as summer, and can be formed into a hedge impenetrable to man and beast.

*The Holly.*

As to laurel hedges, Waterton never would plant them, and he had found by experience that in ordinary hawthorn hedges a bush would often die without any apparent

*Laurels.*

*Forcing  
holly.*

reason, leaving an unsightly gap which could not be filled up. In most hands the holly is a slow-growing tree, but Waterton made it grow with astonishing rapidity.

How he managed to "force" the holly may be seen from his own words.

"People generally imagine that the holly is of tardy growth. It may be so in ordinary cases, but means may be adopted to make this plant increase with such effect as to repay us amply for all our labour and expense.

"Thus, let us dig the ground to a full yard in depth, and plant the hollies during the last week of May, taking care to puddle their roots well into the pulverized soil. We shall find by the end of September that many of the plants will have shot nearly a foot in length, and that not one of them has failed, let the summer have been never so dry.

"Small plants, bought in a nursery, and placed in your own garden for a couple of years, will be admirably adapted for the purpose of transplanting. Had I been aware in early life of this increasing growth of the holly, it should have formed all my fences in lieu of hawthorn."

*Roots and  
branches.*

I tried this plan with perfect success upon a stony and ungrateful soil. The *rationale* of the process is, that the young rootlets, which ought to be carefully spread by the fingers, are able to draw nourishment rapidly from the earth, and in consequence throw up branches in proportion. Waterton advised me to cut down the young hollies at first, and his advice was most valuable, although it cost some pangs when followed.

I mentioned just now that a good holly hedge is impervious to man and beast. So it is; and not even the rat, stoat, weasel, or even that worst of poachers, the cat, can get through it. True, they might push their way between



the stems, but there is one obstacle which prevents them, namely, that they cannot put their feet to the ground.

The holly is perpetually shedding its leaves, especially in summer-time, in order to make way for the new leafage. The old leaves fall, become dry, and curl up, with their sharp spikes projecting in all directions. These points, sharp as needles, prick the feet of the prowling animals, and so prevent them from passing.

*Possibly  
intend.*

Of this property Waterton took advantage. Like many landed gentlemen he had a preserve of pheasants, and was consequently harassed by poachers. Now he hated prosecution, and always evaded it if possible. On one occasion, for example, when eight men and a boy were captured on Sunday morning, while trespassing in his rookery, he released them on finding that they were tailors, saying that he could not think of prosecuting eight-ninths and a half of a man.

*Probably*

*Must point  
of a man.*

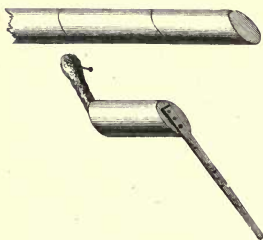
So with the poachers in his preserves. He would not expose them to be shot by keepers, nor would he prosecute them if he could help himself, but he could circumvent them, and did so effectually by means of the holly.

The preserves were situated at some distance from the house, so that the poachers could make a rapid inroad and carry off their booty before they could be seized. So Waterton laid a deep scheme. First he planted near the house, and just opposite his window, a clump of yews, on which trees pheasants are fond of perching. Next he surrounded them with a thick holly hedge, leaving only one little gap, which could be closed by a strong padlocked gate. Then, leaving the trees to grow, he set about the other preparations.

*Holly  
fortress.*

He made a number of wooden pheasants, and did it in the simplest manner imaginable. He got some small scaffolding poles and cut them diagonally into pieces about

*Wooden pheasants.* as long as a pheasant's body. A lath fastened to one end made a capital tail, and all that was needed was to trim the shoulder to the neck, and put a head on the other end, a nail doing duty for a beak.



STRUCTURE OF WOODEN PHEASANT.

By the time that the trees had grown sufficiently for his purpose he had made about a couple of hundred of dummy pheasants. He then threw a few sacks full of beans inside the holly hedge, and laid a train of beans into the preserve. The birds, finding the beans on the ground, naturally followed the trail, and reaching so abundant a supply of food as they saw inside the hedge, flew over it and feasted to their heart's content. Then, not caring to fly, after having gorged themselves, they settled for the night in the yews.

Meanwhile the wooden pheasants were nailed on the trees in the preserve, and so exactly did they resemble the actual birds that in the dark no one could detect the imposition. Even in daylight the dummy so closely represents the bird that a second glance is necessary in order to make sure that it is only an imitation. The accompanying sketch represents one of these dummies on the outskirts of the preserve.

The poachers were completely deceived, and Waterton used to enjoy the reports of their guns, knowing that they were only wasting their shot upon the wooden images, *Poachers outwitted.*



WOODEN PHEASANT IN TREE.

while the real birds were comfortably asleep under his eye.

If the reader will refer to the illustration on page 36, he will see that on the right hand, and near the poplar, is a rather curious circular object. This represents the pheasant fortress in question, and, although the small size prohibits any detail, the general shape and appearance are sufficiently shown. It will also be seen how close to the house is the fortress, so as to be under the master's eye.

He made several more of these ingenious refuges, of which other birds besides the pheasants took full advantage.

There was not a tree in the park that Waterton did not know, and, if the smallest damage were done, he would be sure to find it out. One day I found the keeper much disturbed, having discovered some shot in a tree trunk, and being quite sure that he would be called to account *Knowledge of trees.*

for it. The man was right enough, for Waterton found the shot, before many hours had passed, and the keeper had to undergo a severe cross-examination.

*Aerial study.*

Not only did he know the trees individually, and had distinctive names for them, but there was scarcely one which he had not climbed, and in the topmost branches of which he had not sat, pursuing his favourite amusements of watching birds, and reading Horace or Virgil. There are not many men who at the age of sixty would have either the power or nerve to climb a tall tree, but Waterton retained his powers of tree-climbing until his death, and very shortly before his fatal accident had ascended one of the largest trees in the park, he being then in his eighty-third year.

Such a spot for study may seem a remarkable one, but Waterton was never affected by heights, and the man who had scrambled up the cross of St. Peter's at Rome, climbed the lightning conductor, and stood with one foot on the head of the colossal angel of St. Angelo, was not likely to be made giddy by the view from the top of an oak-tree.

*Feats of climbing.*

In part of his autobiography, Waterton mentions that he climbed to the top of the conductor, and left his glove on it, but he does not tell the sequel of the story.

All Rome rang with the exploit, which reached the ears of the Pope, Pius VII. Knowing that the glove would spoil the conductor, he ordered it to be removed at once. Not a man could be found in Rome whose nerves were equal to such a task, and so Waterton had to repeat the ascent and fetch his glove down again, to the amusement of his friends, and the delight of the populace.

No one could have given the advice in tree-climbing which is quoted on page 50, without having experienced the comparative strength of the different trees. Perhaps

the reader may not know that coming down a tree is a far more difficult task than ascending it. In the latter case, the climber can see his course, and note beforehand where he shall place his hands and feet, while in descending he has to trust partly to memory, and partly to touch.

*Climbing  
and des-  
cending.*

It is easy enough, for example, to spring for a few inches from a lower to a higher branch, but to drop those few inches is a very nervous business. I have more than once seen a climber ascend a tree very boldly, and then be so frightened that he could not be induced to come down without some one to guide his feet. The same rule holds good with precipices, where a man can always ascend where he has descended without jumping, but not *vice versa*.

Even with trees, Waterton must needs have his joke. All the important trees in the park had their names. There were, for example, the Twelve Apostles standing in a group, all starting from one root, the Eight Beatitudes, the Seven Deadly Sins, &c. Then there were an oak and a Scotch fir twined together, and going by the name of Church and State (see p. 64).

*Names of  
trees.*

YEW was one of Waterton's favourite trees, and he was accustomed to say that it would be perfect if its leaves were only furnished with spikes sharp enough to keep out the cats, stoats, weasels, and his pet abhorrence, the brown rat, which he always called the Hanoverian rat, and stoutly believed was imported into England by the same ship that brought William of Orange to our shores. I rather fancy that the Hanoverian origin of the brown rat must have been one of Waterton's early jokes, and that he gradually came to consider it as a fact. The yew furnishes harborage for many birds, which after all do not seem to suffer much from four-footed enemies. The

*The Yew.*



well-known yew-hedge in the garden of Merton College, Oxford, is full of little birds, though their domiciles are not easily seen through the dense foliage.

*Uses of the  
yew.*

Waterton made great use of this valuable tree, and formed with it evergreen walls, impermeable to the north wind, the one foe which he dreaded, and which seemed quite to benumb him. I have seen him with his lips so



CHURCH AND STATE.

paralysed by the north wind that he could scarcely frame a word. He spent most of his waking time out of doors, and his yew hedges were a great advantage to him in sheltering him from the north wind, and forming pleasant nooks which received the cheering rays of the southern sun.

He wrote as follows in his Essay on the Yew-tree: "It

has already repaid me for the pains which I have taken in its cultivation ; and when I resort to my usual evening stand, in order to watch the flocks of sparrows, finches, and starlings, whilst they are dropping in upon the neighbouring hollies, I feel not the wintry blast, as the yew-trees, which are close at hand, are to me a shield against its fury ; and in fact, they offer me a protection little inferior to that of the house itself."

There is a magnificent crescent-shaped yew-hedge, which partly surrounds the stables, and shuts them out from sight so effectually, that no one could suspect their presence unless informed of it. Another yew-hedge forms a sort of wall behind the Ivy Tower, and aids in keeping it quiet for the many birds which breed in it.

*Yew-  
hedge.*

I have given the land view of the gateway (sometimes called the "Ivy Tower" in the Essays) because it shows how admirably Waterton adapted existing objects to his chief pursuit at Walton Hall, namely, the cherishing of birds and study of their habits.

The view is taken from the southern window of the guest-chamber, and is one of the first objects that meets the visitor's eyes on rising in the morning.

One portion of this illustration requires notice. Just above the yew-hedge may be seen a curious-looking circular tower ; with a conical roof. This was built expressly for the use of starlings, and is appropriately named the Starling Tower. Many starlings found a home in the Ivy Tower, but wishing to accommodate these birds still further, Waterton built this tower for them, and a very interesting structure it is, uniting several advantages.

*Starling  
Tower.*

In the first place, it is raised upon a smooth stone pillar, on which rests a large circular, flattened stone, considerably larger than the pillar. The object of this arrangement is to keep out rats, the worst foes of the

*Cats and  
Rats.*

starling. Even the most active and sharpest-clawed rat could hardly climb up the pillar, and if it did, would be stopped by the flat stone. In fact, this pillar and stone are similar in design to the "staddles" on which wheat-stacks ought to be built, if farmers wish to preserve their grain. Cats are also foes to the starling, but the flat stone is too high for most cats to reach by jumping, and if

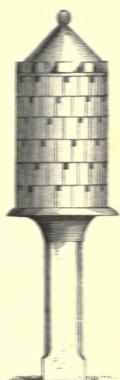


GATEWAY—BACK VIEW.

they tried to do so, the upper surface of the stone is made with a slope, and is so smooth, that the claws could not retain their hold.

The tower is circular, and is built in regular layers of stones. Each alternate stone is loose, and when pulled out, discloses a chamber behind, to which the bird obtains access by means of a channel cut in the corner of the stone. The birds took possession of the tower at once,

as well they might, and it is very interesting to remove the stones and see the birds sitting on their eggs without being in the least alarmed at the intrusion. In consequence of the protection which they enjoy, the starlings are to be found in great numbers around the house, and will assemble on the lawn in front of the sitting-room windows, where they feed without fear, notwithstanding



STARLING TOWER.

that they may be within a few yards of the window from which they are being watched. A second tower was afterwards built and placed in another portion of the grounds.

THE reader may remember that Waterton drained some fish-ponds and planted them with trees, which grew with great rapidity. By means of the ever-useful yew, various sheltering-places were made in it, and there was a little single-roomed cottage where Waterton could sit by a fire